1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
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tion that members of a family are always ready to give each other. Relatives are inclined to exchange presents chiefly among themselves, but there is a constant giving and receiving among all of the people of the village of Hanga-roa.

THE LIFE CYCLE

Birth

Children are always welcomed into a family and the rapid increase of the Easter Island population in the last fifty years indicates the fertility of most of the married couples. There are now 216 children under 13 years of age. I never heard of a woman who was annoyed at the prospect of having a child or of a woman who had an abortion. The desire for children is illustrated by the following popular Easter Island tale, which was given to me as an actual recent incident:

A woman named Rere-ao slept with her husband but saw that she would never have a child. One day she noticed a woman who was pregnant. She pretended to be pregnant too. She also pretended to suffer when the pregnant woman felt the first pains of labor. The other woman gave birth to a child. Rere-ao said to the midwives, "You stay here. I must go out to defecate." She went to the house of the woman to whom the child had been born. She said, "Give me this child. I want to suckle it." The woman passed the child to her and she stole it. She put it in front between her tapa skirt and her waist. Then she returned to her house and said to the women sitting there, "Hurry and take my child." They came to deliver the child and it was born from the front part of her bosom. The real parents looked for their child who had been stolen by Rere-ao. They came to the house of Rere-ao and said, "The child is ours. Why did you steal him?" Then they said to the people, "She only pretended to have a child and for that reason she has taken our child. She is Rere-ao, stealer of the child." The parents took their child back, and thereafter the people made fun of Rere-ao and called her Rere-ao-toki-poki (Rere-ao-the-stealer-of-the-child).

The present islanders do not care whether they have sons or daughters. Formerly sons were preferred, as in many parts of Polynesia. "The son has to carry on the line, succeed to the title and inherit the estate" (31, p. 37). Father Zumbohm (230, vol. 6, p. 131) writes:

. . . If the newborn child was a boy, there was great rejoicing, but if it was a daughter there was less enthusiasm. All of the affection of the family was bestowed upon the first born son, whereas the last one was despised; he bore a nickname that nobody pronounced without laughing.

Pregnancy

At the third or fifth month of pregnancy, but never in the fourth or later than the fifth month, the husband's father offered an earth oven to the parents of the expectant mother. This oven was called *umu takapu moa kokoma* (*takapu*, ceremonial earth oven; *moa kokoma*, intestines of the fowls) and was "proportioned to the number of sweet potatoes or fowls they had at their disposal" (230, vol. 6, p. 130). The food cooked in it was presented with the words, "Umu takapu moa ka kai" (Eat the earth oven of fowl's intestines), and eaten on the spot. The name of this feast was *rae* (the first fruits, the

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sugar cane. To refuse to contribute food for the maintenance of the bird-man was an offence which could be punished by the burning of one's house. The bird-man dropped his old name and adopted a new one, mysteriously revealed to him; it became also the name of the year. Thus the bird cult was the basis for a convenient system of chronology.

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All those who, like the missionaries, were on Easter Island when the bird cult was functioning, stress the violence which inevitably followed the selection of the bird-man. They imply that he had temporal powers similar to those of a chief. Ollivier (165, vol. 39, p. 256) states that the bird-man had "tyrannic power." "The defeated are shamefully relegated to a corner of the island where they starve and die because of cold. With the installment of the new power, burnings and plunderings start. Woe to the man who owns some sweet potatoes or chickens. The chief [bird-man] with his followers will fall upon the houses like birds of prey."

Gana (86, p. 33) was told, probably by the missionaries, that the bird-man was an "important chief whose functions last a year" and whose attributes were of a military nature. Roussel (190, p. 427) writes that the bird-man had authority for daily and nightly marauding and the fooling of the people and for "spending the year in continuous childish and wanton feasts." During the harvest feasts "the *mata-toa* [bird-men] left their caves of the Mataveri mountain," and swooped down like vultures upon everything which suited them (190, p. 428). Rarely did these feasts pass without trouble, since the *mata-toa* quarreled about the booty. The man who was designated by Make-make as bird-man for the year was entitled to a large share of the food distributed at feasts.

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Routledge gives no hint of the military sway of the bird-man, such as implied by missionary accounts. Perhaps there is some connection between the acts of violence recorded by early observers and the statement by one of Routledge's informants that those who did not contribute food to the bird-man were punished by having their houses burned. Perhaps the bitterness of the defeat or the insolence of the victorious group led to serious arguments and even war. Evidence given by the last of the surviving contenders or by witnesses of the bird cult stress the dread consequences these contests had on the peace of the island.

792 193

The old men who informed Routledge gave her 86 names of bird-men; probably most of these names were also those of the years when each man was made *tangata-manu*. Routledge (194, p. 226) remarks that "chronological sequence was achieved with fair certainty for eleven years prior to the final celebration at Orongo. In addition to the bird-name, the name of both winner and *hopu* were ascertained, with those of their respective clans." When Tepano's paternal uncle, Rue, became *tangata-manu*, he gave his bird-name,

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listening for the birds"; here men kept watch day and night for news from the islet below.

The privilege of obtaining the first egg was a matter of competition between members of the Mata-toa, but the right to be one of the competitors was secured only by supernatural means. An "iviatua," a divinely-gifted individual, dreamed that a certain man was favoured by the gods, so that if he entered for the race he would be a winner, or, in technical parlance, become a bird-man or "tangata manu"; it was also ordained that he should then take a new name, which formed part of the revelation, and this bird-name was given to the year in which victory was achieved, thus forming an easily remembered system of chronology. The nomination might be taken up at once or not for many years; and if not used by the original nominee it might descend to his son or grandson; one case was mentioned where a young man who was victorious passed on the honours to an older relative. If a man did not win he might try again or "say that the iviatua was a liar" and retire from the contest. Women were never nominated, but the iviatua might be male or female and, needless to say, was rewarded with presents of food. There were four gods, or "atua," connected with the eggs—Hawa-tuu-také-také, called "chief of the eggs," and Maké-maké, who were male deities; also Vié Hoa, the wife of Hawa, and Vié Kenatea, who were females; each of these four had a servant whose names were given and who were also supernatural beings. Two iviatua "called themselves after Hawa and Make-maké" respectively, but this seems to have been exceptional. Those going to take the eggs recited the names of the gods before meat, inviting them to partake. The actual competitors were men of importance and spent their time with the rest of the Ao at the village of Orongo; they selected servants to represent them and await the coming of the birds in less comfortable quarters in the islet below.

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sides. As bad weather might prevent fresh consignments of food during the weeks of waiting, the men carefully dried on the rocks the skins of the bananas and potatoes which they had brought with them, to be consumed in case of necessity, and it was added with a touch appreciated by those acquainted with the Easter Island, that if the man who thus practised foresight was not careful others who had no food would steal it when he was not looking.

In addition to the "manu-tara," or sacred bird, which is a species of tern, the natives say that seven other kinds of birds, whose names they gave, inhabit Motu Nui; three of these were said to stop all the year round, two to come for the winter, and three, including the tara, for the summer. No good reason was given for the selection of the tara; its cry is its most marked peculiarity; the approach of the flight can be heard for miles and the noise during nesting is said to be deafening; in a cave on the islet there is an incised drawing of the bird with open beak from which a series of lines spreads out fanwise, obviously representing the volume of sound. Names in imitation of these sounds were given to children, such as "Piriuru," "Wero-wero," "Ka-ara-ara." It is worth noting that the coming of the tara inaugurates the deep-sea fishing season; till their arrival all fish living in twenty or thirty fathoms were considered poisonous. The birds arrived in September and on first alighting tarried only a short time; immediately on their departure the hopu rushed out to find the egg, or, according to another account, it was the rushing out of the hopu which frightened away the birds. The gods intervened in the hunt, so that the man who was not destined to win went past the egg even when it lay right in his path. The first finder rushed up to the highest point of the islet calling to his employer by name, "Shave your head, you have got the egg." The cry was taken up by the watchers in the cave on the mainland, and the fortunate victor, beside himself with joy, proceeded to

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off. So he went to Ngaara, who told him to bring ten coconuts, which he broke and put in pieces of the sacred tree, "ngau-ngau"; the spell blasted the offender, who promptly died. Ngaara himself attended the inauguration of any house of importance. The wooden lizards were put formally on each side of the entrance to the porch, and the Ariki and an ivi-atua, who "went with him like a tatane," were the first to eat in the new dwelling: only the houses with stone foundations were thus honoured. The Ariki was visited one month in the year by "all people," who brought him the plant known as pua on the end of sticks, put the pua into his house, and retired backwards.

He also held receptions on other occasions, seated on the broken-off head of an old image, which was pointed out on a grassy declivity among the hills behind Anakena; these were special occasions for criticising the tattoo. Those who were well tattooed were sent to stand on one hill slope, whilst those who were badly done were sent to another; the Ariki and men behind him laughed contemptuously at the latter (which, as the process was permanent and could not be altered, seems slightly unkind). These receptions were also attended by men who had made boats, and by twins, to whom the Ariki gave a "royal name." Such children were not, as in so many countries, considered unlucky, but it was necessary that at birth they should live in a house apart, otherwise they would not survive. This superstition still exists. Shortly before our arrival a woman in the village had given birth to twins, for whom a little grass house was put up; another woman went in and brought them out to the mother to nurse.

The Script

Closely connected with the subject of the Miru clan is that of the method of writing. While we can only catch glimpses of the image cult through the mists of antiquity, the tablets, known as "kohau-rongo-rongo,"[1] were an integral part of life on the island within the memory of men not much past middle age (fig. 98). The highest authority on them was the ariki Ngaara. It was tantalising to feel how near we were to their translation and yet how far. Te Haha had begun to learn to write, but found that his hand shook too much, besides, as he explained, Ngaara

[1] Sometimes called koho-rongo-rongo.

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it with open beak, from which a series of lines spreads out fan-wise, obviously representing the volume of sound; names in imitation of these sounds were given to children, such as "Piuru," "Wero-wero," "Ka-ara-ara." It is worth noting that the coming of the tara inaugurates the deep-sea fishing season; till their arrival all fish living in twenty or thirty fathoms were considered poisonous. The birds on first alighting tarried only a short time; immediately on their departure the hopu rushed out to find the egg, or, according to another account, the rushing out of the hopu frightened away the birds. The gods intervened in the hunt, so that the man who was not destined to win went past the egg even when it lay right in his path. The first finder rushed up to the highest point of the islet, calling to his employer by his new name, "Shave your head, you have got the egg." The cry was taken up by the watchers in the cave on the mainland, and the fortunate victor, beside himself with joy, proceeded to shave his head and paint it red, while the losers showed their grief by cutting themselves with mataa.

The defeated hopu started at once to swim from the island to the shore, while the winner, who was obliged to fast while the egg was in his possession, put it in a little basket, and, going down to the landing-rock, dipped it into the sea. One meaning of the word hopu is "wash." He then tied the basket round his forehead and was able to swim quickly, as the gods were with him. At this stage sometimes accidents occurred, for if the sea was rough, an unlucky swimmer might be dashed on the rocks and killed. In one instance, it was said, only one man escaped with his life, owing, as he reported, to his having been warned by Maké-maké not to make the attempt. When the hopu arrived on the mainland, he handed over the egg to his employer, and a tangata-rongo-rongo tied round the arm which had taken it a fragment of red tapa and also a piece of the tree known as "ngau-ngau," reciting meanwhile the appropriate words. The finding was announced by a fire being lit on the landward side of the summit of Rano Kao on one of two sites, according to whether the Ao came from the west or east side of the island.

It will be remembered that on the rocks which terminate the settlement of Orongo the most numerous of the carvings is the figure of a man with the head of a bird; it is in a crouching